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.... "then, returning free,
Its ebbing surges in the sestet *roll*
Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea,"

To substitute a trochaic measure for iambic, particularly at the opening of a line, is the commonest occurrence in our heroic or blank verse; but SCHIPPER condemns—

"*Making it dance with wanton majesty.*"

BEN JONSON said that DONNE "for not keeping of accent deserved hanging": but it was hardly for such verses as this of MARLOWE'S. SCHIPPER finds (p. 359) a "*Verstoss des rhythmischen Accents*" in WORDSWORTH'S line:

"O Derwent, winding among grassy holms,"

but he will probably have his discovery to himself. Never did poet manage his *cæsura* better than SWINBURNE does; yet his "*incorrecte Cäsuren*" (p. 383) vex our rigid critic. To those who prefer a pony-chaise and a turnpike to the dash of a cross-country hunter, LONGFELLOW'S "*Evangeline*" is better than CLOUGH'S "*Bothie*"; but to say (444) that the latter is "*formell das mangelhaftigste unter den in Hexametern geschriebenen Gedichten*," is to confess that the eye, not the ear, has been at work. There is no better commentary on the inadequate nature of scansion by feet than to find so able a scholar gravely condemning the verse just quoted from WORDSWORTH. Critics like ELLIS and SYMONDS have often beckoned to a freer scansion and a larger system, but SCHIPPER does not follow. His method reminds us of MAYOR'S (cf. MOD. LANG. NOTES, 1887, col. 321), in the '*Chapters on English Verse*;' SCHIPPER reasons that while "*L'Allegro*" and "*Il Penseroso*" have many trochaic lines, the majority are iambic; and hence we must assume the poem to be written in iambic verse. This is political scansion. Majority rules, and of course a Pennsylvania democrat is a republican.

Is there not a better method in store for us?—If

"O Derwent, winding among grassy holms"

breaks the laws of verse, away with the laws,—for what ear is not satisfied? Rhythm means motion; but we begin our prosody by knocking a verse on the head, and content

ourselves with the *post mortem*. Who will give the formula not merely for fixed relations, but for the relation of moving points? If to the relentless accuracy and the power of wide combination shown by men like SCHIPPER, we could add the tact and sympathy and eager sense for melody of every kind, which died with SIDNEY LANIER, we should have a system of versification which would aspire to untie the hidden chains of harmony,—which would tell us what makes the "*fluidity*" of SPENSER'S rhythm, or the cadence of the best lines in "*Comus*." To answer questions like these is, or ought to be, the highest and dearest task for the student of English verse.—So much for method, spirit, goal. For materials, and for actual work, such books as this before us will always be needed, and by their thoroughness and clearness will, like this, command our praise.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD AS A CRITIC.

Essays in Criticism. Second Series. By MATTHEW ARNOLD. London and New York: Macmillan & Co. 1888. 12mo, pp. 331.

If literary criticism has taken its place as a recognized branch of literary art—the humblest of all, perhaps, because the least creative, but probably equal to any as an educative force—the fact is, I think, mainly due to the labors of LESSING and of SAINTE-BEUVE. In England, MATTHEW ARNOLD holds a similar position, although doubtless a less commanding one. He is the first of English critics who seldom or never takes his eye off the object, and whose hand relentlessly sets down what the eye unswervingly observes. He was the first, moreover, to make a systematic attempt to appeal from what he felt were merely personal or insular literary verdicts, to "the great Amphictyonic Court of European opinion." He kept himself "at the centre," as he phrases it; he knew what the brightest and wisest people in Germany, France, Italy, were thinking and saying, and by constantly quoting them he set going "a current of true and fresh ideas." In this way he contributed largely to the task

of making English judgments, whether literary or moral, less rigid and illiberal. Nowhere is MATTHEW ARNOLD so much himself as when trying some accredited British prepossession before the bar of European opinion.

It is most interesting to note the contrast between MR. ARNOLD'S strenuous objectivity and the easy-going subjectivity of MR. LOWELL—the only contemporary English-speaking critic who has any claim to an equally high rank. With the unspoiled instincts of a favorite of Nature, MR. LOWELL quickly finds his way to the best company of every age, and refuses to be button-held by the bores of any age except his own. MR. ARNOLD takes the matter much more seriously and painfully. Mindful of the shortness of life, he prays his gods to grant that the things we learn may be the things that are best worth knowing. Bent not merely upon pleasing his taste but upon forming true judgments, he distrusts his own and all other merely subjective impressions as much as he distrusts merely provincial or national estimates. To him poetry is a religion: "the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us as nothing else can." Evidently, therefore, it is of immense importance to get at the best in poetry and to know it well.

In one of the essays of the volume before us—the essay on WORDSWORTH—MR. ARNOLD tells us why poetry has this unique power of forming, sustaining, and delighting. "Now poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth," noble words which cast a strong light upon the meaning of that well-worn and ill-used phrase, "criticism of life." The first essay in this volume, the deservedly famous introduction to WARD'S Anthology, contains what the critic had to say about the tests by which this perfect speech of man may be distinguished from the imperfect. The value of these tests depends, of course, upon the taste of the person who applies them. This, however, is the case with all rhetorical tests and precepts; nay, even in science, the success of a complicated experiment depends largely upon the skill of the manipulator. Scientific tests of poetry are, of

course, not to be discovered, but MR. ARNOLD'S single-line test is the nearest approach to a scientific test that can be suggested. It possesses the sure educational value of being simple, applicable by anyone, and highly instructive. It would be impossible to apply it attentively and patiently without profit. Yet I cannot but think that MR. ARNOLD, in his own practice, gave somewhat too much prominence to the single-line test, a test that would admit MARLOWE, DONNE, and even GRAY, to the inner circle of great poets, and that would exclude SPENSER and SHELLEY. MR. ARNOLD insists, indeed, upon a large body of first-rate work as well as upon noble single lines; accordingly, he is far from admitting MARLOWE, DONNE, and GRAY to the inner circle. But it is, I think, the single-line test more than anything else that emboldens him to place WORDSWORTH next in rank and worth after SHAKESPEARE and MILTON, and far above SPENSER and SHELLEY. Thus also I partly explain the fact that he deems BYRON a distinctly greater and more wholesome poet than SHELLEY. On the whole, this introductory essay remains the best existing guide to the study of English poetry, its very limitations and omissions being calculated to give it a higher pedagogical value than a more discursive study could possibly have.

The comparison between this volume and the first series of 'Essays in Criticism,' which appeared a quarter of a century ago, is very inviting, but I can only touch upon it here. The earlier volume was undoubtedly the more memorable. It sounded in its day an entirely new note in English criticism, and it has gone into the education of the whole younger generation of literary men. Surely there never appeared a fresher, more stimulating, more audacious book of criticism! Such an effect could hardly be produced more than once by any writer. The present volume continues the work begun in the first; new ground is staked out, but few new principles are laid down, and there is little that strikes us with the freshness of a discovery. Whenever, as is frequently the case, the critic has occasion to repeat himself, he frankly does so, and the effect is as if he had quoted a classic. Only the superficial reader can be affected by this

with a sense of paucity of resources. If the unthinking naturally associate a *copia verborum* with affluence of ideas, everyone who has had any practice in composition knows that it is only an opulent mind that can afford to disclose the real limits of its resources by strict compliance with the rule of LOCKE—which is, in substance, to fit each thought with its perfect phrase and to repeat that phrase at each recurrence of the thought. Monotonous as MR. ARNOLD's repetitions may be to some, most readers, I fancy, feel rather the simplicity and sure touch of a thinker who never fumbles, never spreads a rainbow on a mist of words, and who, having once expressed an idea well, never seeks variety at the expense of precision.

In the exquisite preface to the first series of 'Essays in Criticism' MR. ARNOLD had defended his vivacity as "the last sparkle of flame before we are all in the dark, the last glimpse of color before we all go into drab—the drab of the earnest, prosaic, austere literal future." The reader who retains the fresh impression of the earlier essays may be pardoned for feeling that, between the composition of the essays on HEINE and JOUBERT and of those on TOLSTOI and AMIEL, the critic had indeed gone into drab a little. There is less wit, less audacity, less of that penetrative charm which still draws some readers again and again to the first series of essays. Possibly the secret of that charm is youth, yet no reader of these last essays could think of their strong, lucid author as old. For, after all reservations have been made (my own I must omit here), the studies of BYRON and WORDSWORTH will stand equal in sanity and precision to anything that ARNOLD ever wrote. In the weighty address on MILTON, the critic expresses the opinion that justice is not done by modern criticism to "the architectonics of *Paradise Lost*." How well we could have spared some of the later political essays, and even those on "Civilisation in America," for the sake of a discussion and development by him of this proposition! The chief defect of the essays on GRAY and KEATS is that they are much too brief, too much like mere reviews. It need not be remarked, however, that they both contain much sound criticism. The essay on GRAY suffers particularly by comparison

with MR. LOWELL's completer, more original and more genial study of the same subject. The first half of the essay on TOLSTOI contains a masterly analysis and critique of 'Anna Karénina,' which the essayist compares with FLAUBERT's 'Madame Bovary' much to the disadvantage of this powerful novel and of the novels of the school of which FLAUBERT was the precursor. The latter part of the essay is devoted to sympathetic exposition and criticism of TOLSTOI's religious writings, which are found much less satisfactory than his imaginative and artistic writings. Such a judgment is inevitable, as inevitable as the world's similar judgment in the case of MATTHEW ARNOLD himself.

Touching AMIEL's Journal, MR. ARNOLD emphatically dissents from the eulogy of the translator, MRS. WARD, and from that of the foremost French critics. As a dreamer, AMIEL is inferior to SÉNANCOUR; as a philosophic speculator, he is profitable neither to himself nor to others. His side of real strength and originality has almost escaped the attention of the critics, as it seems to have escaped the vigilant self-scrutiny of AMIEL himself. His talent was for literary criticism. "And not AMIEL's literary criticism only, but his criticism of society, politics, national character, religion, is in general well-informed, just, and penetrating in an eminent degree."

The one incomplete, irreparable thing in MATTHEW ARNOLD's criticism is his treatment of SHELLEY. It cannot be said that MR. ARNOLD's attempts to popularise WORDSWORTH and BYRON have done much to alter the public attitude toward these poets, whose positions were already so well defined. To the holy, WORDSWORTH is holy still; to the filthy, BYRON is filthy still. BYRON's profound political idealism and WORDSWORTH's "natural magic"—both still so perennially attractive to the student—are alike dead to the mass of readers. BYRON and WORDSWORTH have had their vogue. Vogue SHELLEY never had, but in proportion to the fewness of his readers has been the ardor of his votaries. There are welcome indications that more and more readers are turning to SHELLEY, and he certainly has far more readers now than during his life-time. His position in literature is by no means

determined, like the positions of WORDSWORTH and BYRON; in fact, about no modern poet is criticism so much at sea. Critics as different as GEORGE SAINTSBURY and SIDNEY LANIER "bid renowned SPENSER lie a shade more nigh to learned CHAUCER" in order to make a place for SHELLEY by the side of SHAKESPEARE. We knew that MR. ARNOLD disagreed with MR. SWINBURNE touching SHELLEY as much as touching VICTOR HUGO, and if there was one thing needful in criticism that thing was a patient, searching, lucid study of SHELLEY such as MATTHEW ARNOLD alone could have given us. So when, some three months before his death, the *Nineteenth Century* announced the long-desired essay, the disappointment was great when it turned out to be merely a review of DOWDEN's biography of the poet. The essay is fascinating, but it closes where, could but so much be written, it should have begun. By way of criticism the essayist merely quotes himself, warns us against the votaries of SHELLEY, and repeats the last line of the third act of 'Prometheus Unbound'—precisely as one would expect the most hardened Philistine to do. All real criticism is postponed with the words: "Of his poetry I have not space now to speak." Space! the editorial ear was not deaf to MR. ARNOLD; *space* was not what was lacking.

However much we may differ with MATTHEW ARNOLD on special points, surely all must agree that the academic value of such a book as this is inestimable. In an age when the prevailing tendencies in English prose-writing are represented by such questionable stylists as MR. JOHN MORLEY, MR. SAINTSBURY, MR. SWINBURNE and MR. RUSKIN, how tonic and how clarifying are MATTHEW ARNOLD's lucidity and precision. Sanity and liberality of intellect, lucidity and precision of style, are distinctive of MATTHEW ARNOLD, and in the application of these qualities to literary criticism, where they are so arduous and so precious, he is unequalled. The flaming eulogy of SWINBURNE, the eloquence of RUSKIN, the impartiality of SAINTSBURY, the frequent originality of JOHN MORLEY, are admirable qualities, marred, unhappily, in the case of each of these writers, by marked defects of style or of temper. Moreover these excellences are

found in equal strength in other writers of English, living or dead. But among English critics, from BEN JONSON to DE QUINCEY, we look in vain for that exquisite balance of qualities, natural and cultivated, which appears at last in ARNOLD. His great defect, at least in these later essays, is want of that spontaneity which is born of impassioned feeling. He always possesses his subject, but is never possessed by it. One might almost apply to him his own remark upon GRAY: "He never spoke out." The impatient reader is sometimes tempted to murmur:

"Come, come, my lord, untie your folded thoughts,
And let them dangle loose as a bride's hair."

Instead of doing so he meets us with what MR. SWINBURNE has called "his smiling academic irony" and repeats one of his concise and wholesome formulas. MR. SIMCOX laments ARNOLD's "patient didacticism," for of repeating some text from BISHOP BUTLER or M. RENAN, from ISAIAH or WORDSWORTH, from MARCUS AURELIUS or SAINTE-BEUVE, he never wearies. But the reader wearies;—on his part, too, this gingerly way of approaching a subject by means of texts requires patience.

Such patience meets its sure reward. The text may seem to recur with treadmill regularity, but the thought does not move in a circle. If the master is repetitive he is at the same time progressive; analysis of any essay shows a well-connected and carefully guarded advance. If he be somewhat over-solicitous to clinch the nails, it is because they are golden nails, and the extent to which they are borrowed by other builders of "towers of words" proves their genuine worth. Despite his distrust of the letter, no writer has had greater respect, "short of idolatry," for what has been written. "To get at the best that has been said and thought in the world, and to cleave to that" was his aim; and having found or minted the express image of an idea, he was slow to exchange it for baser coin. The result is that his books are full of the concisest and most perfect statements of moral and literary doctrine that have been formulated by the human mind. That so many of these unsurpassable formulas are his own is the best proof of his originality, as it will perhaps prove his best title to perdurable fame. However this

may be, it is certain that no literary critic of his time managed to fill his books so full of what is memorable. A considerable part of certain of his essays might profitably be committed to memory as it stands, and what prose of our time has a better claim to rank as classic? If to be "patiently didactic" leads to this, it must be admitted that patience has had its perfect work. If ARNOLD lacks passion he is preserved from many excesses; passion is a dangerous quality in a critic or in a teacher. Had he been gifted with the copiousness of RUSKIN, with the spontaneity of CARDINAL NEWMAN, his academic value, at least, would inevitably have been impaired. With all their genius, neither of these great writers has stamped so many truths, new and old, upon the minds of men; and as neither is so quotable, neither can be so permanently influential. Wanting in the precious literary gifts of passion, spontaneity, copiousness, MATTHEW ARNOLD had, on the other hand, the indispensable gifts and accomplishments of the critic and the teacher of men, and these are the "patient didacticism" of the scholar, the saving grace of humor ("smiling academic irony"), sanity and freedom of mind, lucidity and precision of expression.

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THE SONNET.

Morfologia del Sonetto nei secoli xiii e xiv.

L. BIADENE. [*Studj di Filologia Romanza*, Fasc. 10.]

One of the most interesting features in the scientific movement of the present time is the appearance of Italy as an important factor. Her political unification has resulted in a concentration of talent and in a renewal of mental energy. While the effects of this activity are seen in many branches of learning, they are particularly marked in the domain of philological and linguistic research, as might be expected both from the temperament and the history of the Italian people. The importance of the reviews in this field now published on Italian soil and in the Italian language is only exceeded by that of the German periodicals. Consequently the knowledge of Italian is becoming indispensable to the scholar, and this is only

the more evident when the statement is applied to Romance studies. Of names of the first rank in this department Italy has already ASCOLI, D'ANCONA, MONACI, MUSSAFIA, RAJNA,—leaving aside CARDUCCI as not falling into the purely scientific list,—and many younger men, who bid fair to be worthy successors of these pioneers. Among journals she offers the doughty *Propugnatore*, now entering on a maturity of prosperity; the *Archivio Glottologico*, which renders valuable services to dialect study; the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* for literary history only, and the *Studj di Filologia Romanza*, whose parts, appearing as monographs, embrace both philology and literature. This growth of productiveness has been accompanied by a notable improvement in method and style, the lack of which had been a serious obstacle to the general usefulness of Italian publications; for while clearness of exposition may not enhance the intrinsic value of a study, it renders its contents vastly more accessible. Happily the author of the present monograph has appreciated this fact.

The Sonnet has recently been the object of considerable attention on the part of historians of literature. The origin, development and ramifications of this most popular form of courtly verse have been variously commented in the many languages in which it flourishes. The general opinion of the critics has been that the sonnet had its source in the stanza of a Canzone; that, as BARTSCH says ('Grundriss der prov. Lit.'), it resembled the *cobla esparsa* of Provençal poetry. A suggestion of a different structure I first find in the remarks of NIGRA on the strambotto (*Romania* v, p. 432), where, in discussing the primitive type of the latter, he adds that the first part of the sonnet is composed, on the same model, of two tetrastichs with rimes frequently alternating. D'ANCONA, in his 'Poesia popolare italiana,' a compilation which illustrates all the (rapidly disappearing) faults of Italian productions, without index or table of contents or even heads to chapters, goes further and affirms the sonnet to be the joining (*accozzamento*) of two tetrastichs, on the pattern of the Sicilian octave, and of a hexastich, without the final couplet rimes. The first methodical research,